(b) the teledensity of rural India as on 1st December 2004;

(c) the reasons for not finding an increase in rural teledensity inspite of an unprecedented growth over the last three years;

(d) whether it is also a fact that still 85,228 villages do not have access to a single telephone connection in the country; and

(e) if so, the action being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD) : (a) The teledensity of Urban India as on 1st December 2004, is 25.24%.

(b) The teledensity of Rural India as on 1st December 2004, is 1.67%.

(c) The Rural teledensity is also increasing as shown below:

March, 2002	=	1.22%
March, 2003	=	1.49%
March, 2004	=	1.58%
1st December, 2004	=	1.67%

(d) and (e) There are only 66822 revenue villages without telephone facility (as per Census 1991) which are inhabitated and are not naxalite/ insurgency affected villages in the country. Administrator, Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) invited tenders and awarded the work to BSNL for covering these villages. As per the conditions of the work awarded, these villages are planned to be covered progressively by November, 2007. Out of these villages, 2654 have been provided with telephone facility upto 31-1-2005.

Deficiencies in IT Act

339. SHRIMATI N. P. DURGA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have set up a Committee of Experts to examine the deficiencies in the IT Act, 2000;

(b) if so, the terms of reference given to the Committee; and

(c) what enabling provisions the present Act contain with regard to e-governance initiatives, cyber forensics, etc.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Terms of Reference given to the committee are given in the enclosed statement (*See* below).

(c) The Chapter-III of the IT Act 2000 deals with e-governance and Chapters IX(Panalties and Adjudication) and Chapter XI (Offences) deal with cyber forensics etc.

The entire IT Act 2000 is available on the website www.mit.gov.in of the Department of Information Technology.

Statement

Terms of Reference Given to the Expert Committee on IT Act

1. To re-examine the IT Act, 2000 so as to ensure that the Act remains enabler to development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and has adequate measures for promoting growth of electronic commerce and electronic governance in the country and also for regulating cyber crimes and cyber forensics as well as addresses all aspects of, the cyber security etc. in a manner that there is no scope for different interpretations and follows the international guidelines for uniformity to gain from the process of globalisation.

2. To consider the recommendations made by the Inter-Ministrial Working Group on Cyber Law & Cyber Forensics & finalize the amendments to the IT, 2000.

3. To consider and recommend suitable legislation for data protection (privacy) in the IT Act, 2000.

4. To consider the feasibility of making the IT Act, 2000 technology neutral and recommend necessary amendments to the IT Act, 2000.

5. To consider the additional feedback and suggestions received by the government and recommend suitable amendments to the IT Act, 2000.

6. To consider the issues of regulation of operations of cyber cafes and blocking of websites within the IT Act.

7. To consider the matter of India signing the European Cyber Crimes Treaty and make suitable recommendations.

8. **The Expert Committee shall submit its report within a period of SIX weeks.**

Illegal use of Communication means by Private Companies

†340. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of private sector companies functioning in telecommunication sector and the participation of private sector in total capital investment in telecommunication sector in the country;

(b) whether some complaints regarding illegal use of communication means by certain private sector companies in telecommunication sector have come to light, if so, the names of such companies; and

(c) whether Government are going to take any action against the said companies which have violated provisions, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD) : (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.